

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write to urgently request that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) authorize the transfer of 20,000 ventilators to New York State from the national stockpile. The number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in New York State continues to rise, and currently totals more than 30,000. New York, and particularly New York City, is the center of this public health crisis, and the state's hospitals are bracing for an influx of patients, many of whom are going to need ventilators to survive the disease. Recognizing the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced a Major Disaster Declaration for the state on March 20, 2020.<sup>1</sup> We strongly support and urge the swift approval of Governor Andrew Cuomo's outstanding request for 20,000 ventilators for New York State, and request that HHS and the Administration commit to additional support from the national stockpile as the situation evolves.

President Trump has recommended that individual states take it upon themselves to search the market for medical supplies they need, including ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves and gowns. Governors across the country tell us that having every state separately purchasing the same equipment leads to competition between them, unnecessarily driving up prices and causing delays in supply delivery to the places that desperately need it.

We understand that Vice President Pence announced during a Fox News town hall that 4,000 ventilators will be sent to New York State in the coming days.<sup>2</sup> New York State has been able to independently obtain 7,000 ventilators. However, that still leaves New York with only a small fraction of the 30,000 ventilators that medical professionals and state officials tell us they need.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency, *President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declaration for New York (March 20, 2020)* (online at <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/03/20/president-donald-j-trump-approves-major-disaster-declaration-new-york>)

<sup>2</sup> *Pence says thousands of ventilators en route to New York amid coronavirus crisis*, Fox News (March 24, 2020) (online at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/white-house-sent-2000-ventilators-to-ny-will-sent-2000-more-this-week-pence-says>)

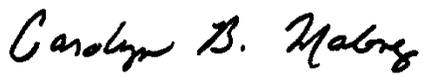
<sup>3</sup> *Cuomo says NY needs 30,000 ventilators, pleads with feds for help*, The Hill (March 23, 2020) (online at <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/489214-cuomo-says-ny-needs-30000-ventilators-pleads-with-feds-for-help>)

It is estimated that the peak of the pandemic could be reached in 14 to 21 days from now, which means that the state cases of COVID-19 are currently on an upward trajectory.

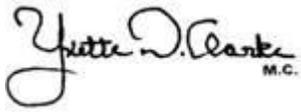
The federal government must step in to ensure that any equipment in reserve in the national stockpile gets directed to areas of greatest need. The national stockpile is intended for just this kind of emergency situation when there is a sudden need for materials and no time to waste in supplying frontline institutions to increase their supplies. Deploying the equipment to the nation's hospitals is a key component to treating patients and helping hospitals increase capacity safely.

We strongly urge you to consider and approve this request as quickly as possible, consistent with all applicable rules and regulations. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



**CAROLYN B. MALONEY**  
Member of Congress



**YVETTE D. CLARKE**  
Member of Congress



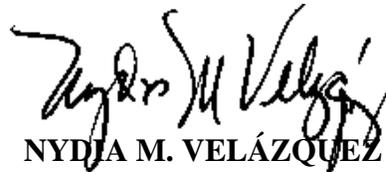
**MAX ROSE**  
Member of Congress



**HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES**  
Member of Congress



**SEAN PATRICK MALONEY**  
Member of Congress



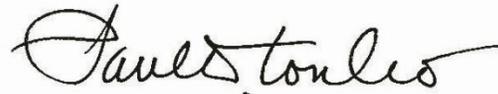
**NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**  
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**PETER T. KING**  
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**NITA M. LOWEY**  
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**LEE M. ZELDIN**  
Member of Congress



**ANTHONY BRINDISI**  
Member of Congress



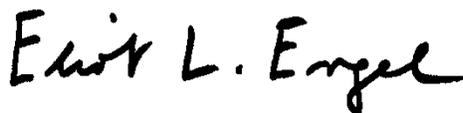
**JOSÉ E. SERRANO**  
Member of Congress



**ANTONIO DELGADO**  
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**ELISE M. STEFANIK**  
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**ELIOT L. ENGEL**  
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